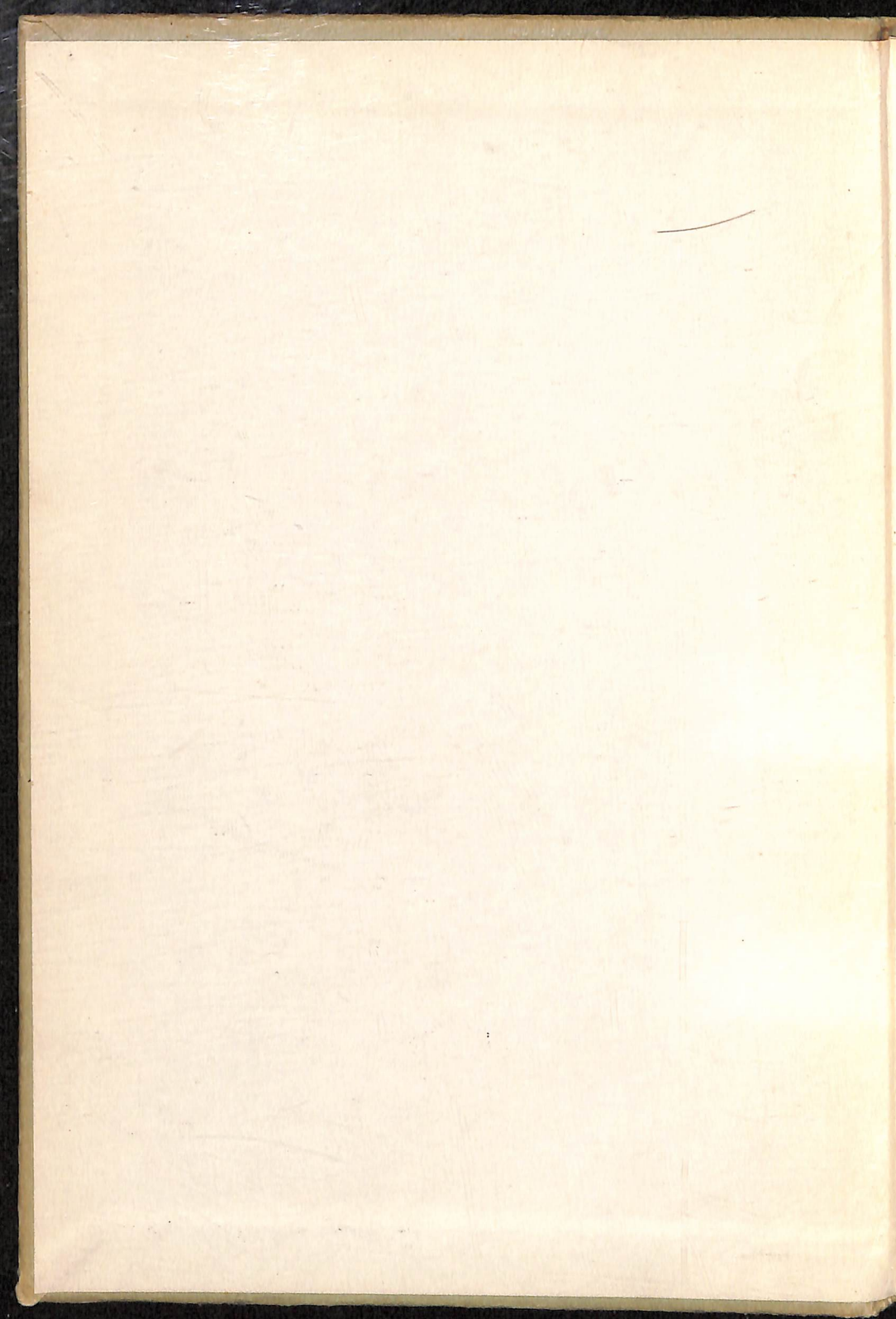


So, Mary Sang

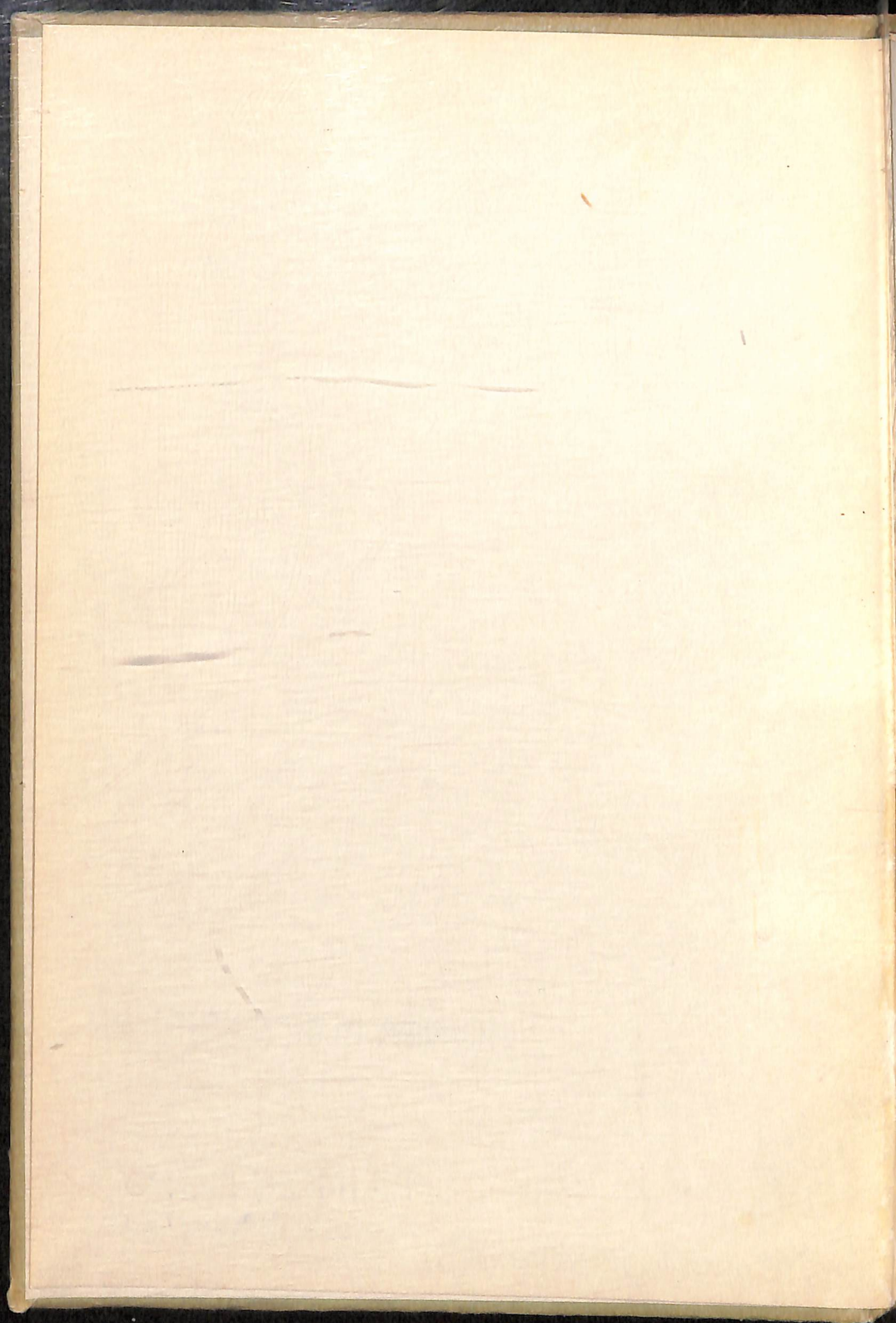
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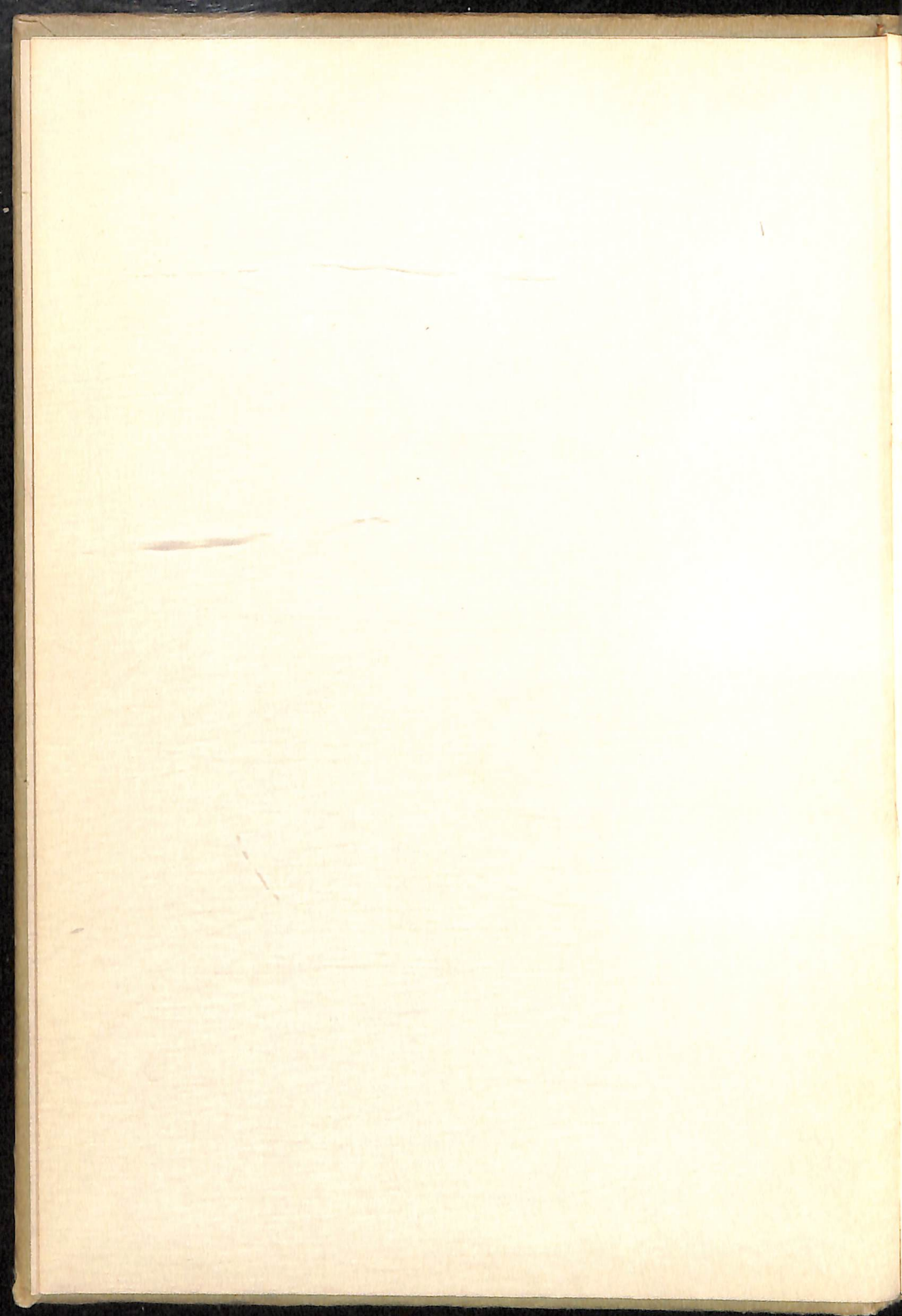
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SO, MARY SANG



So, Mary Sang

By

M. E. COUSLEY

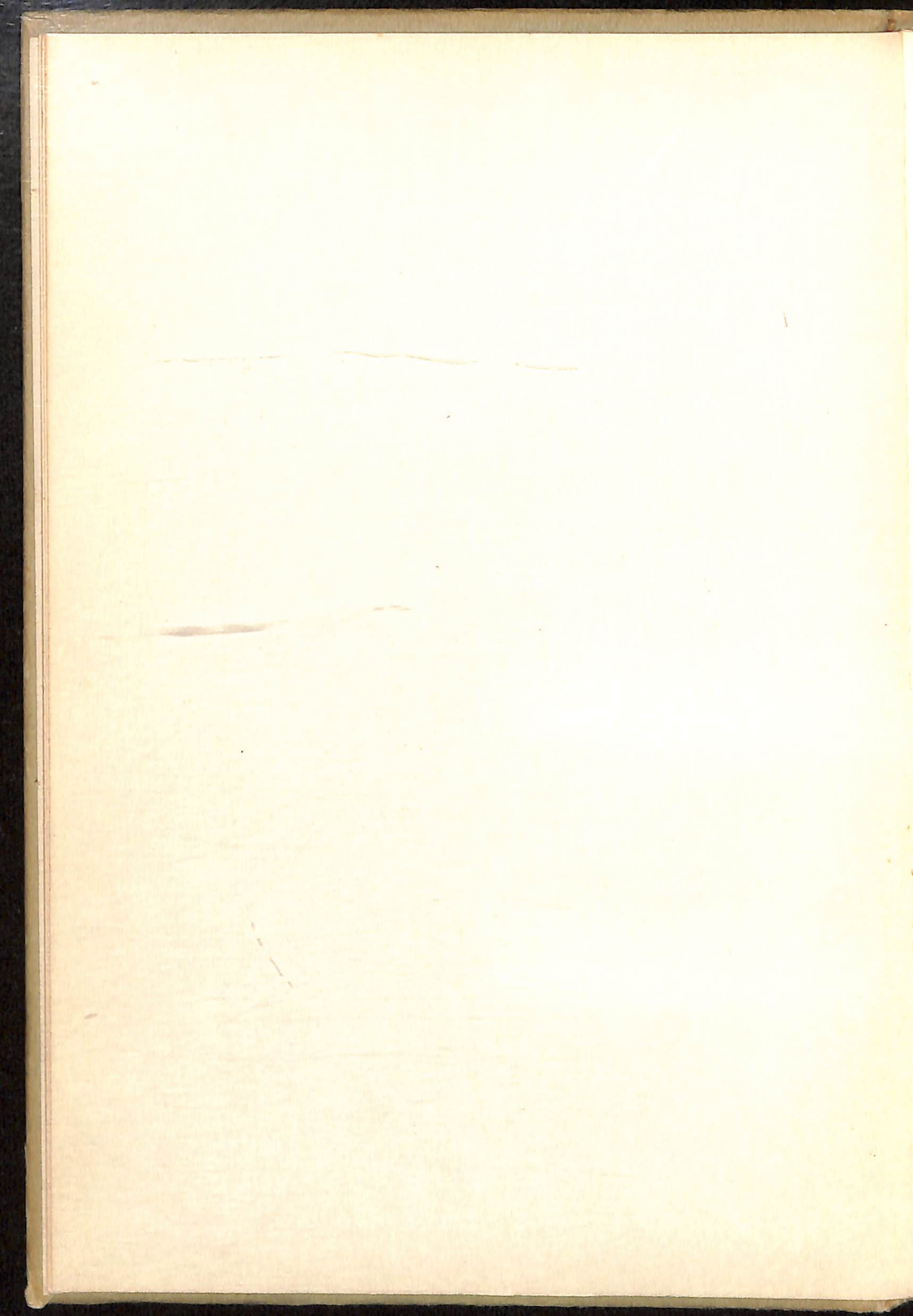


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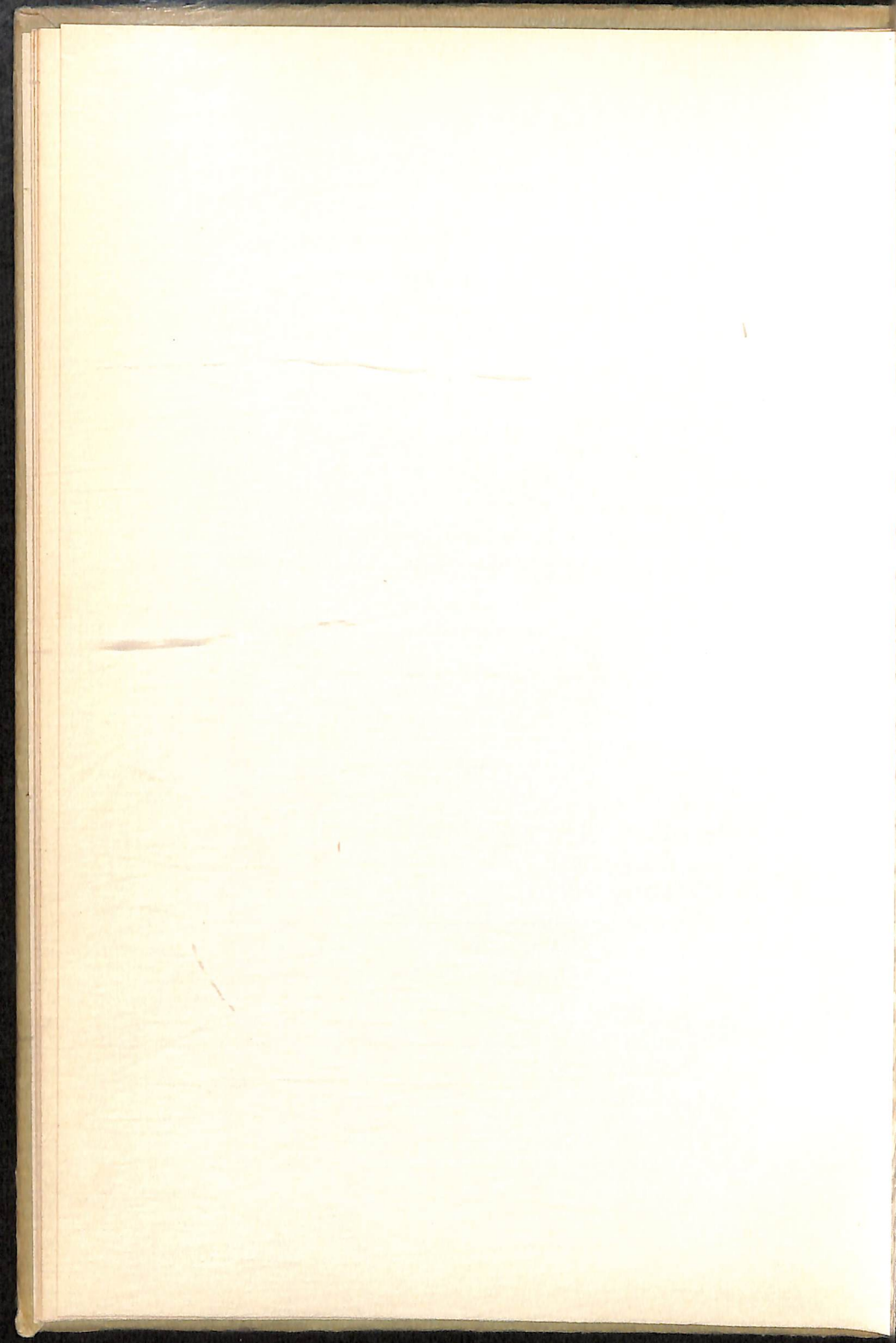
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FOR CHRISTMAS—
AND ALL IT HAS MEANT TO ME



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Conception

When I was born, on Christmas day,
"For this," they heard my mother say,
"Her name is Mary." and 'twas so.

But now, this seems so long ago,
And there have been so many dreams;
I scan them all for little gleams

Of truth, she gave me with that name.

She never told me,—just the same

I've always thought she hoped I'd be
God-chosen, as the Christ's Mary.

She only could the Savior bear,

But all creation God may share.

So through the dreams of my desire,

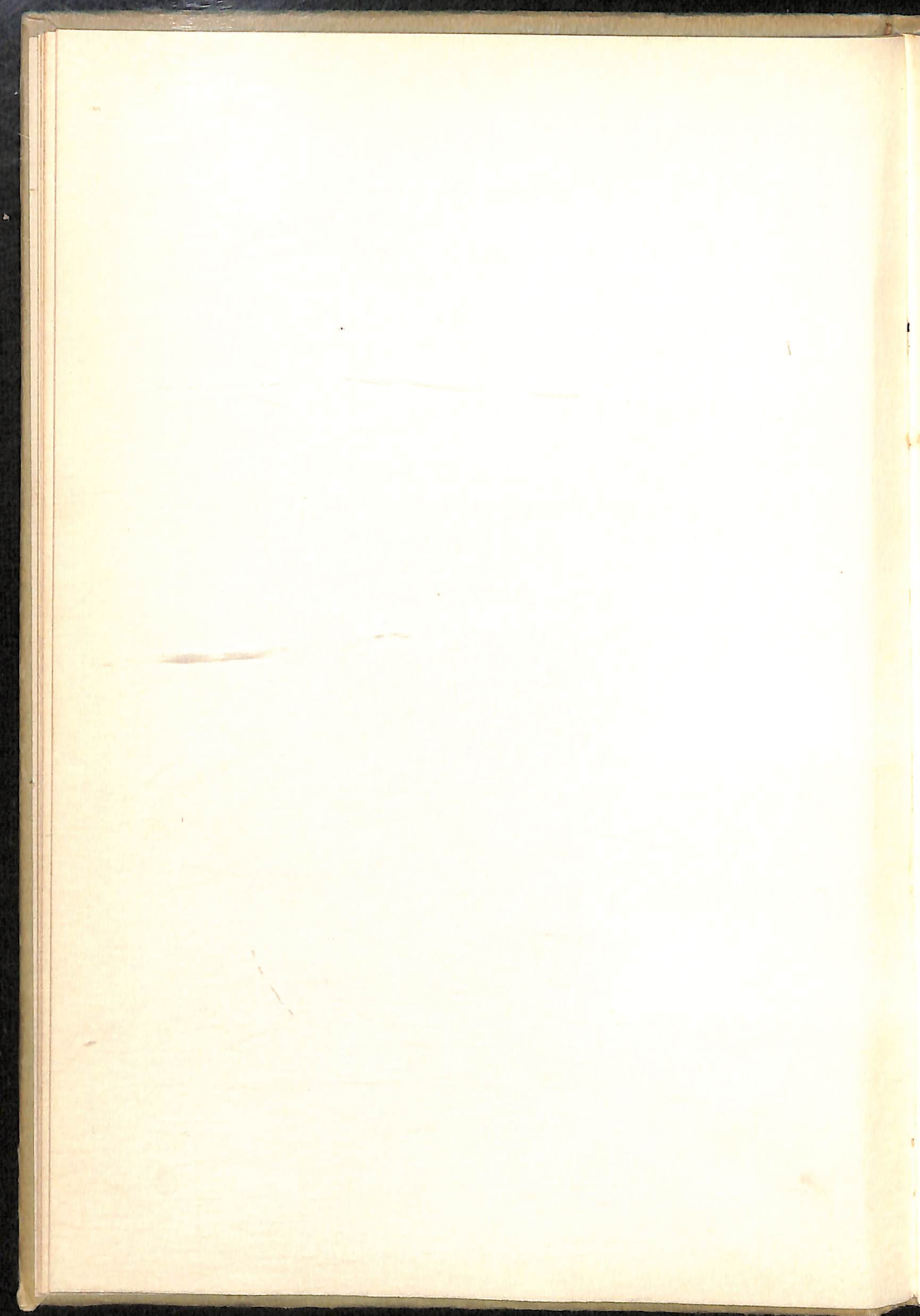
Sometimes, I feel God's kiss! O, Sire

Of all that may be born,—be kind,

Help me, creating this, to find

Some little, lovely Jesus lore

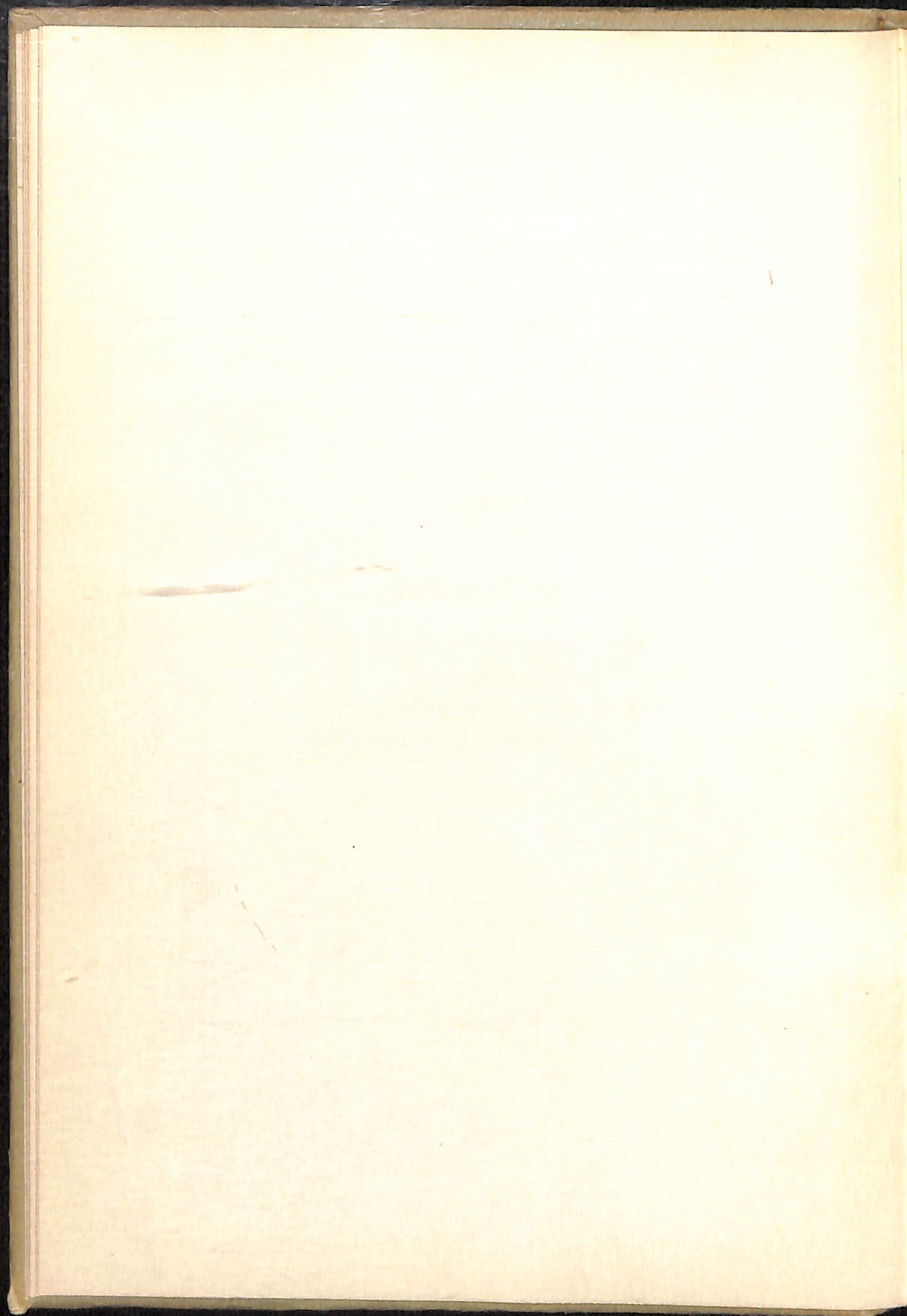
No one but Mary knew before.



PART I.

So, Mary Sang

My Joseph will lead our mule
safely along,—
Hush, Baby, my darling,—
you'll still hear the song.



Love's Old, Old Story

The spring greened hills around old Nazareth
Called to a gentle maid who prayed, one day,
Beside the casement altar in her room:
"Jehovah, grant me grace to serve Thy will!"
Then wandered forth to find an offering.
And Romance laced, through dreams and wanderings,
Her cloak around the girl to prove her prayer.
Still eyed and pure as lilies on her shrine,
The kneeling maid, returned, lifts up her face
In wonder at the angel standing there.
"Mary!" sounds the name she is called by,
While perfume as of incense fills the room.
But soon her elders call,—"Come to us now."
There, wedding clad, awaits her espoused mate.
His eyes, though old, are dream filled too:
"God's blessing is on her," his angel said.
And so, his cloak wrapped round, protectingly,
He bears her to his carpenter's abode.

Bethlehem

Dear little Maiden,
Resting there, so fair
And young and mild,—
With puzzled eyes
At wise men tall
And shepherds all
Around your child;
Brave, tender woman,—
In your heart, apart,
A dream is born.
Your questing eyes
The shadows scan:
Your Son,—a Man;
A cross! Then Easter morn.

So, Mary Sang

Hush, Baby, my darling, while Mother sings.
Hush, they are gone now, shepherds and kings.
It is safe and warm, in our own home, here,—
My Joseph keeps watch by the door,—no fear
Shall come to your heart. Sleep sweet, Little One,
And I shall sing on, to you, now the day's done.

An angel's wing touched my heart, one day,—
"Mary!" I heard the angel say,
"Your little new baby, God's Son shall be."
The angel, my Darling, said that to me!
Think of it, Jesu,—God's Son, in my care!
O, little One, sweet One, so gentle and fair!

There singing, I've wakened you, Baby, my Love,—
Look,—through the doorway, a star shines above
The head of my Joseph! It must be, up there,
God's watching us too! I never could bear
Aught ill to befall you!

My Joseph, you call?

We travel, tonight?

O, You seem so small,

Little Jesus, to ride in the desert!

I come,

My Joseph! You heard an angel's voice, from
Our God in the heavens? O, then we must go.

Hush, Baby, my darling,—I love you so!
Here, in my arms, as we ride, you shall lie
And watch all the beautiful stars in the sky.
My Joseph will lead our mule safely along,—
Hush, Baby, my darling,—you'll still hear the song.

First Oasis

Flight of a bird's wing,
Misty, on the sun's waves,—
Over the desert, blooming!
Lie here, Baby, I'll still sing,—
Here, where the spring laves
Your hot little feet.

Glooming

And precious, the shadow
Of the shelter, my Joseph makes:
Goat skins, on tall reeds.

Riding

Under a star meadow
We wearied not. Now, slakes
Our mule his thirst,—we biding,
Rest, till stars shine.
Then,—Egypt,—Little Jesus, mine!

Door Step, In Egypt

My Joseph, weary, sought a home among these
streets, last year;

Now, neighbors come to us for things, near every
day.

I think they love our Jesus for his gentle way.

O, there He comes, with Cara!

See, He has no fear,
Although His wobbly, little legs can hardly clear
The steep, stone curb, He scrambles down, a wisp
of hay

Held in His chubby hand, to feed an ass!

I pray
Jehovah, He will do and learn so much, while we
are here.

Goodby, my friend,—thank you for Cara's help.

O, now,
Jesus, my Lovely One, we are alone! Come, Sweet,
We'll wait for Joseph, on the step. There, cuddle
close.

How gay the sunset river is!

That heron rose
From amber pools,—so,—fly Your arms! For it
is meet,

As Joseph says, You learn all secrets Egypt can bestow.

The King Is Dead!

O, Joseph, Jesus, come!
A messenger is here.
The King has died this year.
O, now we can go home!

Kind guest, forgive me some
O'er flow of joy! Not drear
Has Egypt been, but dear
To us, the land we're from.

Dear Joseph, can we go?
Yes? Presently? Jesu!
Haste, help me with your things!
My heart with gladness sings,
Dear Little Boy, for you
At last, your home shall know!

Desert Night, Near Judea

I'm glad we tarry here, tonight. Tomorrow we
may find

Our home for years to come.

You seem so troubled, Joseph, why?
Is it because you fear Elizabeth is gone?

We'll try
Her door. But if that fails, then Naz'reth beckons.
O, how twined

With mem'ries mixed, those gates!

With child, I passed them—now the wind
Of fate brings me, with child again, to ask their
welcome.

Lie

Here, close beside me, in the starlight,

Joseph, dear,—nor sigh;

Our Jesu sleeps,—sleep you. Jehovah has our way
designed.

Hush, Little Jesus,—hold my hand.

You thirst, Small One? Here, then
Drink from the spring, where once I bathed your
feet.

Soon you will be

Big Brother to the child I bear!

But now, I hold you near
My heart, this one last night, beneath the stars,
alone.

So clear,

Sometimes,—'twas told,—I see You grown and
King. It frightens me!

Tonight, Jehovah,—can't he be my Little Son,
again?

Tomorrow, Is a Holiday!

Light, comes spring, o'er waiting hills!
On my Jesus' robe shine bright, O, sun!
Twas spun and woven and washed by one
Whose First Born, Passover soon fulfills.

Sing, children,—dance with me! O, my heart thrills!
Tomorrow, Jerusalem,—harvest begun!
Come, Jesus, we'll tell what Jehovah has done
That Passover's kept. 'Tis so that He wills.

Chide not, dear Joseph, that we be so gay.
Now, all is ready for our sunrise start.
Look, Jesu holds the babes, entranced, with tales!
Our kin will note His worth and that He fails
Not, in your teaching. Surely, Joseph, part
Of all that's told will come to Him, one day!

Return From The Temple

He looked so sad, as though He'd come
From some great height, held there by wings,
That my chiding made useless things!
But, what He said, O, Joseph, some
Day there will be no turning from
This Way He's chosen. My heart sings—
Is mute. Awhile, it seems, He clings
To us. I'm very glad we're home!

Jesu, see how the moonbeams light our sharon rose!
The household sleeps,—walk with me to the
garden's end.

We're here, alone. Look at me, Little Son,
grown tall.

How can I tell You what I must? Or, is it all
Set down, in Your heart, as in mine?

Jehovah, lend

Me grace! I bore Him for You. . . . Now,—
at last, He knows!

A Sandal And The Morning Star

Yes, Lord, I know I shouldn't treasure earthly things,—

Only His baby Sandal. This is his birthday;
I've watched beside the window, here, all night,
to pray

And feel and think. Somehow, His little sandal
brings

Again, the years He seemed my Child, and to them
clings

The strange, sweet mystery of a self, not mine, I may
Have shared with Him. I wondered at His lovely
way.

Later, my Joseph said it was Your mark for Kings!

I dream, Lord! . . . This is not real,—that I bore Jesu
To be a king,—and they hanged Him on a cross! . . .
Speak, Lord! Give me a sign! Others, from near
and far,

Say they have seen Him. O, I want to know it's
true!

"Hush, Child," You say,—“no love or sacrifice is
loss”?

Why, Lord,—His birthday dawns,—to bring the
morning star!

Transition

Near twice a thousand years are recorded
Since "stars and angels sang" to mark the night
A new born Babe, in Bethlehem's manger lay,
And "Mary pondered these things in her heart."

O, Little Jesus, of a maid's pure love,
'Tis wondrous strange Thou'st lived through all
these years,
To fill the old world's heart this Christmas eve
With longing,—yearning faith, in some great plan.

O, little Sister,—Brother,—near or far,—
Tonight, one gift we share,—“The Son of Man.”

*To Mary,
With the Wind-Blown Hair*

O, Mary, with the wind-blown hair, how young
you seem!

Your lifted chin, fine, slender lips tremble:
do you dream

Of love's first kiss? E'en black-robed, in the
Christmas choir, today

You'd not be solemn,—though reverent,
your shining eyes were gay.

O, Mary, with the wind-blown hair, you seem so
young!

That other Mary, years ago, was young as you.
She found herself the mother of a Son—
unnamed,—nor knew,

Except by heart, that He was God's Son too,
and was to be,

An angel said, "The Savior." But the shadow
of the "tree"

Was not seen by Mary when Magnificat was sung.

O, Marys, of two thousand years and now,
how young you are,

To hold the sons of all the world within your hearts!

To mar

The perfect image of a soul, perhaps, before you
guess!

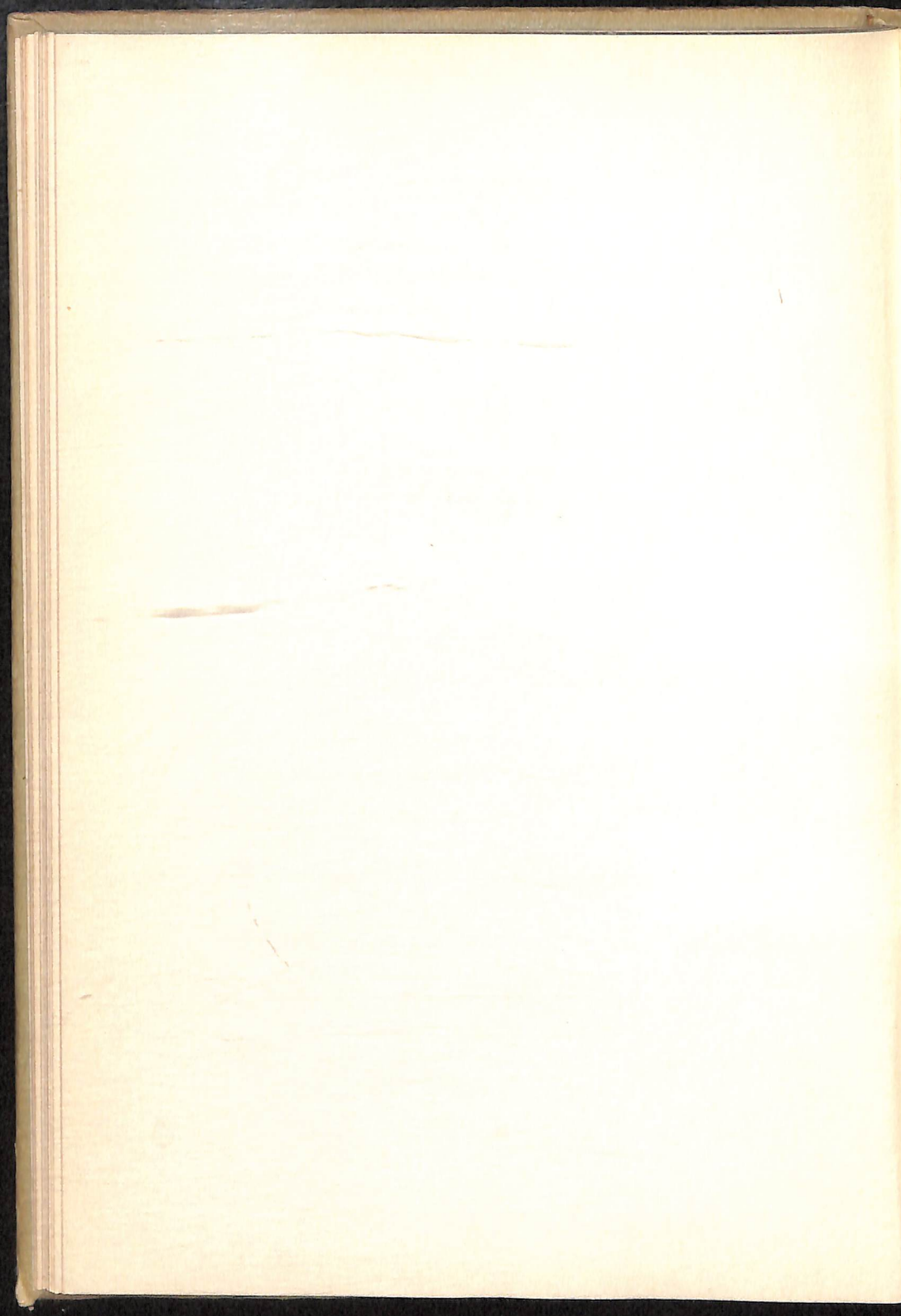
O, pray to keep your pattern true, through war
and stress!

Mary,—e'en with the wind-blown hair,—
are you so young?

PART II.

Thought Made Word

. some stairways,
'Tween heaven and earth are wrought.



Some Stairways

I will not be bound by words, I cannot be,
When this high, released feeling comes over me!
Only wind, clouds and sunshine could be so free.
But sometimes, emotion, passing, leaves flying
 tendrils of thought,
That, with loving persuasion, on a trellis of verse
 may be caught.
O, maybe, 'tis so, some stairways 'tween heaven
 and earth are wrought!

Twelfth Night

In olden days, when great kings died,
the mourning lasted long
And feasts were held and stories told
to honor the departed.
Then last of all, the body, wrapped
in gorgeous robes, with song
Was laid upon the funeral pyre,—torches
applied,—then started.
The fire and incense. To the skies, in
chants, were borne the deeds
Of noble years. On leaping flame, the soul
rose to redemption.

Once more, our Christmas King's reign ends
and for a change he pleads:
For all his stately evergreens he asks
a meet exemption
From garbage carts and stinking dumps!
An unfit fate, is this
For heralds of so grand a day. A funeral
pyre, presenting
The Christmas trees of all the town,
its people would not miss,
But crowd, to watch the last grand rites
and then, with song assenting,
And torch alight, they'd speed the soul
of this dear holiday.
Borne, so,—upon the sweet smoke clouds,
the noble Christmas Spirit
Might rise to immortality, yet live,
in memory's way,
Ever, within our hearts. What strength
to be, always, so near it!

My Love Came in The Door

On Christmas night, my Love came in the door;
Beside the family hearth he talked with me.
At sixteen, I had prayed for this,—and more,
Knew it would come: our hands would touch, and he
Could never fail to feel my heart's desire.

On Christmas night my Love sat waiting, nor
Touched my hand till all were gone. Then we,—
As though long, long ago God planned this for
Our night,—looked in each other's eyes to see
Our mirrored selves, lit round by Love's bright fire.

Another Christmas

A little grave, all holly wreathed,
 has changed Christmas, this year.
The children have their sparkling tree
 and all their hearts hold dear,
But even they are conscious of the mound
 beneath the snow;
We have not lost, but tempered, is the joy
 we used to know.
For in the star flung skies a secret
 door seems open, now,
Where thought goes in and forth, 'twixt
 those beyond and us below.
One child passed through, but by the
 loosing of her little hand,
Gave grace to share all other's grief and say
 "we understand."

A Little Boy's Christmas Story

My Grandpa likes to talk to me
An' sometimes he says strangest things.
The other night I's on his knee,
When we'd come home from seein' strings
Of lights an' swellest Christmas trees
All over town! an' I's undressed.
My Gramp gave me a little squeeze,
An' says, "Do you know that it's bless'd
Old Christmas tide?" an' hunched his chair
T' 'he window where our candle burns
On Christmas eve. "Look—way out there!"
He says—an' pointed, where earth turns
To sky. An' there's the brightest star!
"There is a story," Gramp said, then,
" 'Bout little children gone, way, far,
To heav'n. An' still they wanted, when
Christ's birthday came, a tree to light.
An' God said, 'Good, I'd like that too!'
They danced and sang, on Christmas night
Around their tree.

"An' one child, who
Had just come, set a candle, gay,
On heaven's west side window sill,
To light earth's children, all, so they
Would know that she was glad!

"An' still
The brightest star,— . . ."

“Come, Son, it’s time
For prayers and bed!” Mom called me, so
I kissed Gramp, quick.

“Now, down you climb.”
He says, but hugged me, whisperin’ low,
“Remember, the star says ‘Merry Christmas!’ ”

With a Christmas Cloak,
From Dad to Daughter

A simple subject, this
To compass so much bliss!
Your mother made it, to
Surprise a wish that grew
Unhoped for.

Stuffs, someplace

She gathered, that would grace
Her love's desire,—then stitched
And coaxed.

As though bewitched
The thing gained lovely shape!
"There, now,—” she held your cape
For show, with happy sigh;
Her eyes begged me to try
To dream, with her, of youth.
"On Christmas morning, Ruth
Will find it by her bed!"
And suddenly, instead

Of reading on, I sought
Her busy hand, and brought
Her dear loved face so close
My own, we kissed and chose
To dream our dreams.

For you
I dreamed this cloak, so new,
Within its folds held love
Enchanting you above
All ill . . . Love can do so!
O, daughter, mine,—you know
What Christmas is: then, may
You know *all* Christmas means
someday!

On Christmas Night

O, a ball and a sprig of holly
And a candle lighted, bright,
And children, dancing 'round a tree,
On Christmas night!
O, a pudding, round and jolly,
For everyone's delight
And a turkey, brave with stuffing brown,—
A scrumptious sight!
Old Santy comes in with a jingle
Of sleighbells,—there's snow on his coat;
He's a doll for Nan, a horn for Tim,—
For Paul, a beautiful boat!
O, the world's with joy a tingle
And minds in a sweet dream float!
O, lay away the old year's woe,
An evening to gaiety vote!
For Love grew the red, red holly,—
Love lit the candle, bright,—
And Love gave us children, 'round His tree,
On Christmas night.

Reverie on Christmas Eve
1939

What difference make these wars, tonight?
A still, small place of peace
Is bright, around my Christmas tree.
If leaders, all, would cease
Their selfish struggling for power,
To share my Christmas tree an hour,
Would it give the world release?
I know not. But I think of this,
As I sit beside my tree;
At birth, Christ's pathway started
The road to Calvary!

What Lights A Shrine?
1940

There is a stable shrine, in Bethlehem;
A star marks where the little Jesus lay.
The faithful tend a lighted diadem
Above a manger, where all pilgrims pray;
A soldier guards the door, by night and day,
And will there be a light above the place
Where any leader, living now, was born?
Two thousand years from now, will any trace
Of Hitler's,—Stalin's,—baby bed, forlorn,—
Or Mussolini's bide? Or will the scorn
Of generations, blacken out their lives,—
Who made of men but things to die for them?
The manger light stands for a creed that strives
to prove eternal life! Death could not stem
The light of Jesus,—born in Bethlehem.

Over Seas For Christmas
1941

Two knit,—two purl:
Blue wool round my needles curl,—
Sweater, for a little girl.
Two purl,—two knit,—
Careful, so 'twill snugly fit.
Love's in every stitch of it.

Quietly, I sit beside
My husband. Peace and love abide
Within our home. My stitches glide
Across bright needles. Could it be
That I might send, across the sea,
Threads, from peace and love round me?

Two knit,—two purl
Bind off the neck for a little girl.
Warm and snug the sleeves will fit,—
Two purl,—two knit.

Then purl across and knit right back;
Across her heart, these stitches track!
O, would they'd warm the cold, and lack
Of peace and love her heart must feel!
Why,—the child seems very real!
Brown hair and eyes with bright appeal.

Two purl,—two knit:
There,—I've almost finished it.
Snug, her tummy, it will fit.
Two knit,—two purl:
Tied off with a kiss, for a little girl.

The Toymaker: A Christmas Fantasy

Tak, tak,—tak, tak,—his hammer goes;
The wagon near him grows and grows.
A little, old man, in a factory, new,
Sits, patiently building, with nails and glue.
There's a wistful look in his kind, bright eyes,
And, often, while making the wagon, he sighs.

As his memory reaches back through the years,
His own little flaxen haired girl appears,
Reaching, where, high on a Christmas tree,
A tiny doll hangs. Ah,—fair to see
The child's sweet face,—as the doll taken down
She holds it lovingly,—all her own!

If only to his lot would fall
The pattern for a tiny doll,
That, hanging on a Christmas tree,
Would make a child's face glad to see!

His dream goes on to a window, that brings
A maiden, grown tall, standing by it who sings
While washing. Blue is the gown tucked low
Across her bosom. Blue the ribbon bow
Tying her golden hair that softly curls
Around her happy face. White pearls
Of foam, the suds about her clean, strong
Hands. White, the clothes she hangs along
The line. And standing, straight and fine,
Behold, there is the mystic sign
Of motherhood upon her form!
Though 'tis summer now, all fair and warm,
She sings, "in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus lay down his sweet head."

Tak, tak,—tak, tak,—the hammer goes.
The toymaker's wagon grows and grows.
What matters the pattern of his toys?
His mind is filled with Christmas joys.
A happy smile is on his face;
For the child, to be, he asks God's grace.

Tired Christmas Eve

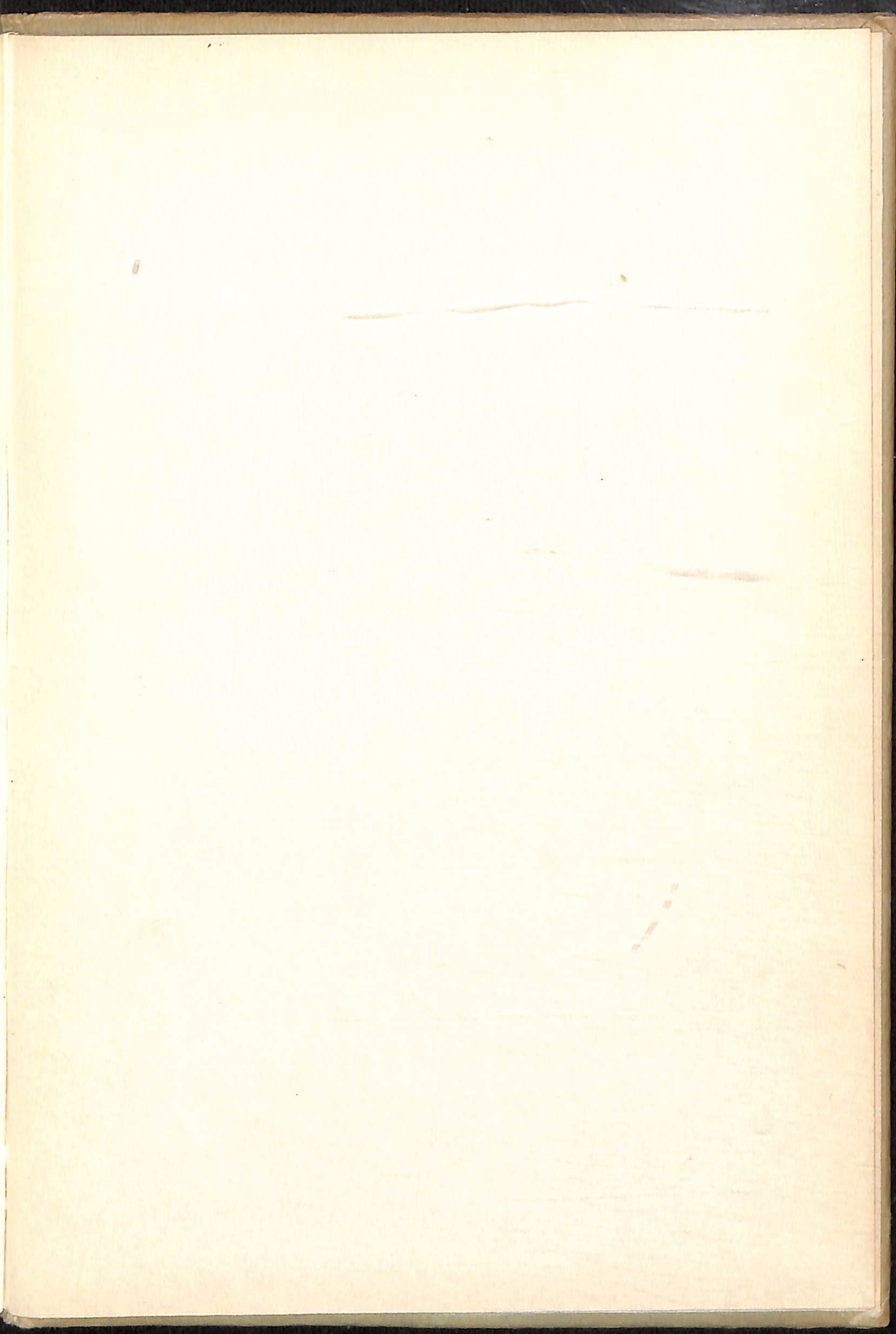
'Tis not so long a day,
Nor any way
Too far
Till evening comes,—
And, in the sunset west
Beside the new hung moon,
There shines a star.
The stilled wind hushes,
Through clear marked trees,
In reverence.
O heart of all the world,
Stand still!
Cease rushing blindly,
Nowhere!
Peace spreads her mantle
To enfold your soul;
Tired One,—the star
Sign, is a goal,—
Deliverance!

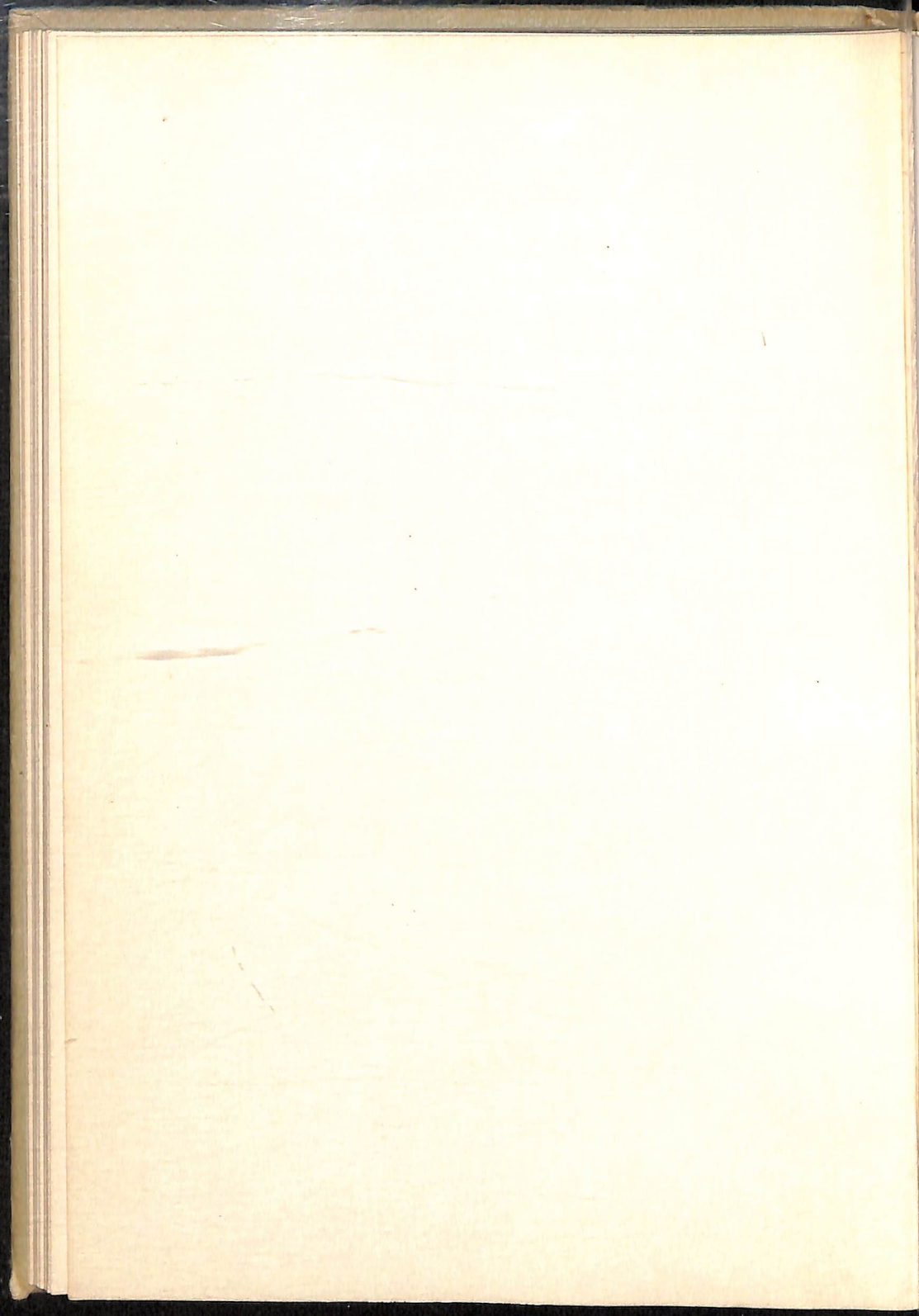
Song and a Prayer

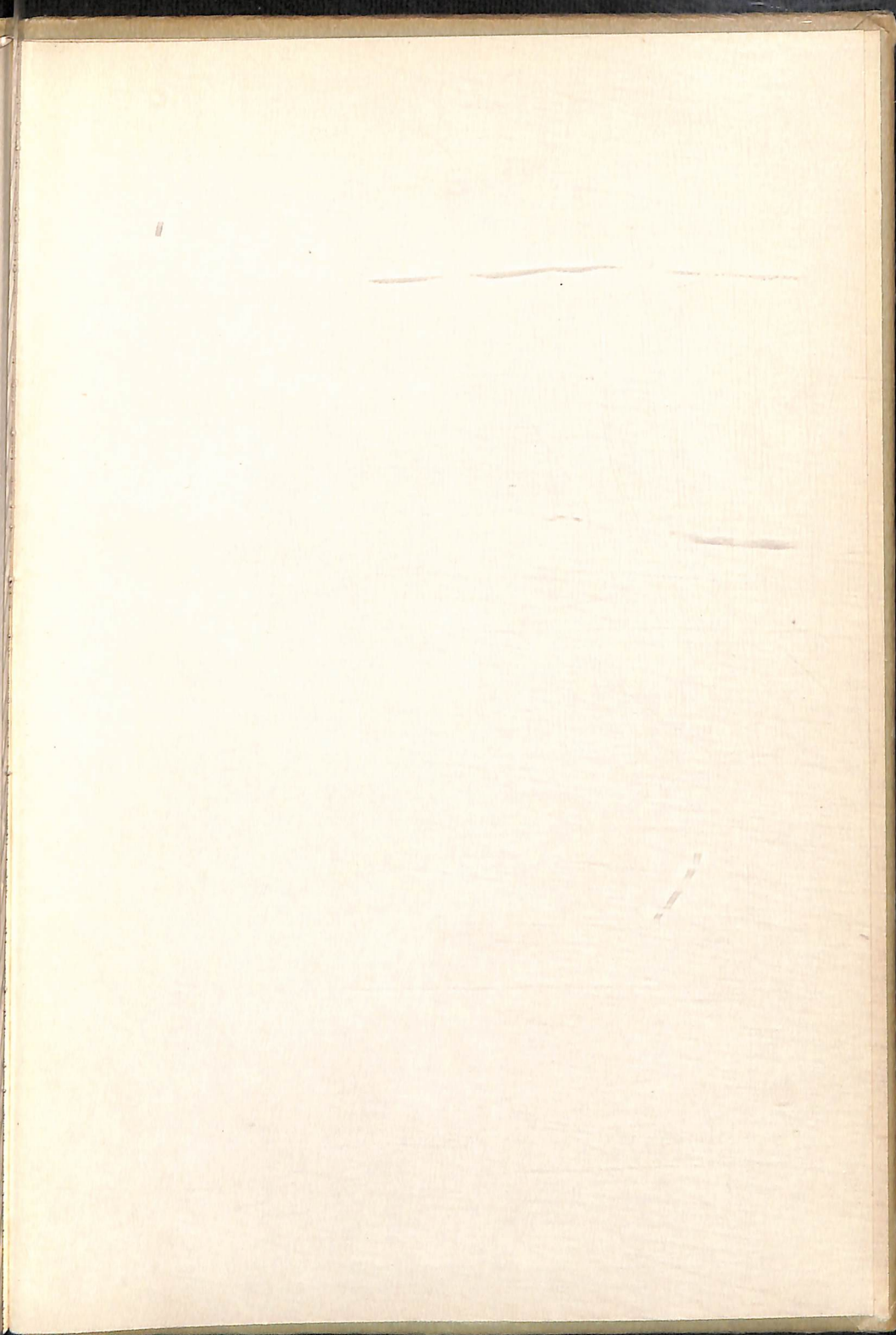
White pigeons fly up from a shanty roof:
The little shack stands 'neath a hill, aloof
From the rest of the world, on a frosty morn.
'Twas a day like this, after Christ was born!
Ah, maybe, there might be a new baby there,—
All sweet and tiny, with soft brown hair!
And the sun on the roof, melts the hoary frost,
While the pigeons fly high, without being lost!
Ah,—maybe, the babe will grow tall and strong,
To care for his mother,—ever so long
O, God, keep us close, on a frosty morn,—
The day after Christmas, when Christ was born.

Amen

Goodnight,—goodnight,—sleep sweetly,—dawn
Will come again. Dream not of now,
But of the end. Evil will bow,
Defeated,—when this night is gone!









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